

Important milestone in political history: Arubans and Netherlands Antilleans can now vote for European Parliament

The Council of Ministers of The Netherlands ratified on June 1 a change in the “kieswet” law of The Netherlands to allow Arubans and Netherlands Antilleans to participate at European Parliament elections. The law change had already been accepted by the Council of the Dutch Kingdom on May 11, following a decision by the European Court on a lawsuit filed by the leader of the Aruban AVP political party – currently the largest opposition party on Aruba, mr. Mike Eman and Member of Parliament for AVP Benny Sevinger, represented by dr.mr. Mito Croes. The verdict allows Arubans and Netherlands Antilleans living on the islands to cast their votes in their respective countries for candidates running for a place in the European Union’s Parliament.

Eman and Sevinger argued that it is a fundamental right of all members of the community to have the voting right in an organization that makes rules and laws by which the community must



Benny Sevinger, Mike Eman and Mike de Meza in a meeting with Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Verhagen (2nd from left).

abide. The European Parliament has a growing authority and influence on many factors that concern Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, for example, matters concerning immigration and nationality for The Netherlands – including the islands – are regulated out of Brussels, where the Parliament seats.

For the first time, the European Court called Arubans and Antilleans living on the islands, “burger” or citi-

zen of the European Union, which recognizes that they have the same rights as any inhabitants of the European Union, EU, and can profit from all civil rights laws same as any European Union citizens does.

The sentence must serve as an eye opener for Aruba and the Antilles, Eman and Sevinger stated Friday in a press release. The European Union is closer to Aruba than most people realize and the

union is not the “enemy,” Arubans are citizens of the European Union, they said. To benefit from the socio economic (quality of life) advantages that all other citizens of the EU benefit of, we have to chose for the UPG status and leave the LGO status which limits our rights as European citizens, they said.

With the change in law, for the first time all members of the Dutch Kingdom will be voting in the same elections,

for the same parliament, which should be an incentive for all political parties in the Dutch Kingdom to work together, Eman and Sevinger expressed. This offers an opportunity for all Kingdom partners to work together, instead of against each other, they said.

Mike Eman and Benny Sevinger, represented by Mito Croes, are now also seeking the right for Arubans to vote for the Tweede Kamer, Dutch Parliament and they announced the initiative to seek the possibilities and right to vote for Aruba government elections by Arubans living abroad.